

November 24, 1955

Mr. Dennis Flanagan
Scientific American
2 West 45 Street
New York 36, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Flanagan:

Almost seven years ago, I received a letter from the editor of the nascent Scientific American requesting a manuscript. I did send you one in due course, but for whatever reason, it was never published, although you were kind enough to pay me for the very rough draft that I had submitted as a preliminary version. However, I hope that enough time has passed to warrant a fresh start.

During that interval, bacterial genetics has gone through several gyrations, but probably nothing has been more mysterious or excited more interest than the phenomenon of transduction. I have had recurrent questions from biologists, even immediately outside my own specialty (and sometimes in it!) which indicated that more fundamental explanation was needed than I would care to include in an ordinary technical review. I therefore decided to put together the enclosed manuscript, and the most likely place for its publication, for the audience I had in mind, seemed to me to be your magazine. At least, in writing this draft, I have kept in mind your prescription for an article that might be addressed to "a hypothetical scientist in a field far removed from [my] own."

Naturally, I hope that you will be able to accept this article, but whether you do or not I would appreciate your comment on it. I have tried to avoid my previous mistake (of sending you a rough draft) but realize that while the ms. seems finished to me now, you may find it suitable grist for your editorial mill. I have been especially puzzled about the form of reference to other scientists' work, of which there is of course a good deal here. I have also not attempted to make finished drawings, but will do so if you mistakenly conclude that I could do better than your own staff.

I am enclosing return postage and an address label.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics